

A LITTLE BOOK ABOUT COUNTRY LIFE.



Illustrated with Eight Coloured Pictures by Birket Foster.

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THE HAYMAKERS.

THE HAY-FIELD.



ET us go out into the air. It is spring-time. The sun shines warm. There are green leaves on the trees, and the birds sing among the bushes. The grass in the fields has grown long, and men have cut it down. When it is dry, it will be made into nice, sweet hay. It is fine fun to

help to make hay. Boys and girls go with long forks and toss the grass about, so that the sun may shine on all of it; and then men take great rakes made of wood, and rake the hay into rows, and when it is dry into heaps, which they call hay-cocks. If dark clouds come, and it looks as if it were going to rain, then all the men and boys, and women and girls, rake as hard as ever they can, to pile the hay into great heaps, so that it may not get wet. In a few days, if it be fine, they will come with carts and waggons, and take all the hay-cocks away to a corner of the field, and make them into one large hay-

stack. And they will cover the stack with a thatch of straw to keep the rain out. And when winter comes, and there is no grass in the fields, then the hay will be cut, and will be carried to the farm-yard for the horses and cows to eat. Good hay smells sweet, and it is very pleasant to walk amid it when it is newly mown, or to lie by the side of a hay-stack, and read a good story-book.

Our dear little Mary and Ned
Have come to the meadows to-day,
Far better than lying abed,
Is tossing about on the hay.

Now Mary has covered Ned o'er,
And only his feet can be seen ;
She piles up the hay more and more, .
Till Ned is all buried in green.

At last he jumps up with a shout,
And scatters the hay far and wide,
Then chases dear Mary about,
With laughter on every side.





PET RABBITS

JENNY'S RABBITS.



AR away in the country lives a little girl named Jenny Brown. She has a hutch full of pretty rabbits. You know the box with the bars in front, in which they keep rabbits ; they call that a rabbit-hutch. Jenny is very fond of her little pets, and feeds them twice every day. They eat bran, and carrots, and cabbage leaves, and many other kinds of green food. Some of Jenny's rabbits are white, some are red and white, some are black and white, some are quite

black, and some are grey. Jenny likes a little black and white one best, and often takes it in her arms and lets it eat out of her hand; its name is Beauty. When her young friends come to see her, Jenny is sure to take them to the yard where the rabbits'-hutch is, and then she lets the rabbits run about, and gives them carrots to munch. Close by Jenny's house there is a rabbits' warren, that is, a large bank of sandy earth, where hundreds of wild rabbits live in holes which are called burrows. On a bright evening, or on a moonlight night, it is very funny to watch them jump and skip about, and then, when they hear a noise, to see them

run into their holes. Soon you may see two or three put out their noses again, and then more will come out, and stamp their feet, and wash their faces, as you see cats wash theirs. Presently, six or eight will run a race, and all jump into their holes. Then perhaps fifty or sixty will scamper away together, and run as if a dog were after them ; all of a sudden they will stand quite still, and then they will begin frisking about like kittens. They are comical little creatures, are they not ? Wild rabbits are all of a light brown colour ; they feed on almost any green food they can get, and do much harm to young trees by nibbling the bark off.

THE WOOD-MOUSE.

Do you know the little Wood-mouse,
That pretty little thing,
That sits among the forest leaves,
Beside the forest spring?

Its fur is red as the red chesnut,
And it is small and slim;
It leads a life most innocent,
Within the forest dim.

'Tis a timid, gentle creature,
And seldom comes in sight;
It has a long and wiry tail,
And yet both black and bright.

It makes its nest of soft dry moss,
In a hole so deep and strong;
And there it sleeps secure and warm,
The dreary winter long.



THE YOUNG GARDENERS.

GARDEN FLOWERS.



JENNY'S mother is very fond of flowers, and so is Jenny. Her father and brother often spend a long day in the garden ; and Jenny likes to be with them, to help to carry the flowers about, or to put them into pots to be set on the window-sill indoors, or to nail up the rose-trees against the wall. Her little sister Maud likes to be in the garden too, and to have a pink to smell or a primrose ; and Jenny will often make

a daisy-chain for gentle Maud, and put it on her little head, or sometimes a wreath of violets. First she will put a purple violet on a twig, and then a white one, till she has covered the little stick all over, and only the sweet flowers can be seen. You would laugh to see the little girl crowned with a wreath of violets. She thinks it so grand, that she runs about for every one to look at her. Every Saturday afternoon in the summer time, Jenny carries a pretty nosegay of garden flowers to a kind old lady, who lives in a house in the village, and the old lady always gives Jenny a sixpence to carry home, and some tarts or something nice for herself

and little Maud. Jenny can arrange a garland very prettily ; this is how she says she makes it :—

JENNY'S GARLAND.

Here damask roses, white and red,
 Out of my lap first take I ;
All these I run along the thread,
 My chiefest flowers these make I.

Among these roses in a row
 Next place I pinks in plenty,
These double pansies then for show,
 And will not this be dainty ?

A course of cowslips then I'll stick,
 And here and there (so sparely)
The pleasant primrose down I'll prick,
 Like pearls that will show rarely.

Then with these marigolds I'll make
My garland somewhat swelling ;
These honeysuckles then I'll take,
Whose sweets shall help their smell-

The daffodil most dainty is
To match with these in meetness ;
The columbine compared to this,
All much alike for sweetness.

Sweet-williams, champions, sops-in-wine,
One by another neatly.
Thus have I made this wreath of mine,
And finished it completely.



THE SHEPHERD-BOY.

CHARLIE THE SHEPHERD.



CHARLIE CARTER
the shepherd lives
close by Jenny
Brown. Charlie's mo-
ther, whose cottage is
just across the green,
is a widow. He is shep-
herd to Farmer Stone,
at the Old Manor Farm.

Charlie has a sister named Bessie,
who is milk-maid at the same farm.
When she has done milking, she will
often walk a little way home with

Charlie. You can see they have just come to a gate, which he opens only a little way, so that but one sheep at a time can go through. This is the way he counts them, to see if there are the proper number. Charlie has a black and white dog called Trusty, who takes great care of the sheep. Trusty is a very great help to Charlie, who could scarcely get on without him. He always shares the food which Charlie takes with him into the fields, and they both sit or lie under a great oak-tree to eat their dinner. Bessie and Charlie are very good to their mother, and always give her part of the money they earn. She is very old; so when

Bessie has finished her work at the farm, she goes home, and makes tea for her and Charlie. Sometimes Bessie's mistress gives her a cake or some eggs to carry home, and always allows her to take some milk. Mrs. Carter can bake a little sometimes, with the help of Jenny's mother, who is very kind, and often goes to see her. Sometimes, on a Sunday, they have a joint of hot meat; it is a great treat, for they rarely have more than fat pork and bread. They have a garden, which Bessie and Charlie attend to when their day's work is over, and it looks quite gay with flowers in the summer-time. In one corner are cabbages, potatoes,

carrots, onions, and all sorts of greens; there are also some gooseberry and currant-bushes, and an apple-tree. And under the apple-tree there are two bee-hives, and in some years they sell the honey for three or four pounds, which help to pay the rent of their cottage. Though they are poor, they are very happy and contented, and Bessie always keeps the house clean. She has to get up very, very early to do it, as she has to be at the farm by half-past five.



THE GLEANERS.

THE GLEANERS.



UMMER is over now, and autumn is coming to change all the green leaves into red and brown, and the wheat to a golden yellow. And now the bright corn has been cut down, and harvest is nearly over. At Farmer Stone's the last load has been carried, and the gleaners are picking up the ears of corn which the farmer's men have left. At eight o'clock in the morning the church bell is rung,

and then the gleaners may go into the fields that have been cleared; and at eight o'clock in the evening the bell will be tolled again, to tell them they must all go home. They call it the gleaners' bell. Bessie Carter and Mary Green, and her young brother Jack, have been glean-
ing ever since breakfast, and you see they have each picked up a good sheaf. They are now waiting till the waggon has taken the last load from the next field. When the sun is not too hot, it is pleasant work enough. The gleaners take their dinners with them, and sit in the shade of the hedges or under the trees to eat it, and there is plenty of fun. Bessie

Carter has taken Charlie's dog Trusty with her to watch her basket when she leaves it under the hedge, and Trusty would bark at a fine rate if any one were to touch it. But I dare say he will let us look in. What has Bessie got for her dinner? There is a little piece of pork on a slice of thick bread, and an apple turnover, and a little bottle of water. At the end of harvest, Farmer Stone always gives his men a supper, which they call the Harvest Home, when they are very merry. They have plenty of roast meat and plum-pudding, and some of the Farmer's strong ale, which you may be sure they like very much; and they finish the evening with a song.

HARVEST HOME.

Summer's toiling now is past,
Harvest now hath sent her last,
Her last, last load ;
If the field containeth more,
Master, give it to the poor,
Abroad, abroad.

Let them through the corn-field roam,
While we welcome harvest home.
Harvest home,
Harvest home !
While we welcome harvest home.





BLACKBERRY-GATHERING

BLACKBERRYING.



This Saturday afternoon, and a holiday for all the boys and girls at the village school. What are they so busy about? They are getting blackberries out of the hedges. Do you know the blackberry bramble? It grows very long, and trails on the ground, and has sharp thorns. In summer it has a pretty white blossom, and in the autumn a rich purple fruit, of which country chil-

dren are very fond. Jenny Brown and Mary Green and her brother, and two or three more, have gone out for the afternoon, and have taken their baskets, so that they may get a great many of the berries. You see Jack has climbed up to the top of the hedge to get a big cluster he can see there. They are all happy, are they not? They will take the berries home to their mothers, who will make them into puddings or into jam for the young ones to eat with their bread. In some parts of England children gather bilberries, which grow on little shrubs near the ground, but they are not so large or so nice. Mulberries are something like black-

berries, but they grow on large trees in gardens, and poor children do not often get them to eat. When you go to gather blackberries, you must mind that you do not tear your dress, or prick your fingers too much. The bramble thorns are sharper than roses, and stronger.

TO THE BRAMBLE FLOWER.

Thy fruit full well the schoolboy knows,
Wild bramble of the brake !
So put thou forth thy small white rose,
I'll love it for his sake.
Tho' woodbines flaunt and roses glow,
O'er all the fragrant bowers,
Thou need'st not be ashamed to show
Thy satin-threaded flowers.

FEEDING THE CALVES.



OWN the lane by the side of Jenny Brown's cottage, you will find a farm-yard, with only an old barn and a few sheds for cattle. There is no cottage near, and it would have rather a desolate look were it not for a row of walnut trees that grow round the pond and overtop the barn, and in summer time give plenty of shade to the sheep. This is Farmer Stone's off-farm, as he calls it,



FEEDING THE CALVES.

and there are almost always a score or two of bullocks, or cows and calves, to be seen there; and this is the place where Bessie Carter has often to go a-milking. I have seen ten or twelve calves there at a time, and very funny it is to watch one of the boys take a keeler* full of milk, and see them run to him for a drink. They are rather rude, though, for they push each other about, and all try to get their noses into the tub at once. They are playful little fellows, are the young calves. They will frisk about like young lambs, only they are not so graceful, and they are very fond of butting each other's

* A shallow tub.

heads, and sometimes they will run and butt against Bessie or the boy ; but they are not strong enough to do any harm.

In the month of October, Farmer Stone's men thresh the walnut trees. Jenny Brown tells me when it is to be, and I always walk down the lane to see them. The men get up into the trees, and take long poles and knock the walnuts down ; and all the boys and girls of the village are ready to help to pick them up, on the chance of getting a few given to them for their trouble. You would laugh to see how many women and children have their fingers stained by the walnut shells when they go to church on the next Sunday.

THE WELCOME ROBIN.



INTER has now come, and the ground is covered with snow. One morning, as Jenny was at breakfast, she heard a little chirp outside the window. She got up to see what it was, and there, hopping about on the white carpet, was a little Robin. Jenny went back for some bread, and to call her brother and sister to see him, and then she threw some crumbs on the snow. The cold made Bobbie very hungry,

so he soon picked them up, and then chirped for more. Every morning after that, as soon as Jenny had finished her breakfast, she took some little pieces of bread on a plate and crumbled them on to the ground, calling Bobbie, Bobbie, Bobbie! Very soon down came the little bird from a laurel bush close by, where perhaps he had slept all night. When spring comes, Bobbie will not often visit the cottage, for then he will find insects and worms, which he likes better than bread. But when Jenny walks in the garden, she will hear Bobbie singing to her one of his sweetest songs.



THE ROBIN'S BREAKFAST

ROBIN REDBREAST.

COME here, little Robin, and don't
be afraid,

I would not hurt even a feather ;
Come here, little Robin, and pick
up some bread,

To feed you this very cold weather.

I don't mean to hurt you, you poor
little thing,

And pussy-cat is not behind me ;
So hop about pretty, and put down
your wing,

And pick up the crumbs, and don't
mind me.

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